



Sheffield TIMES

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BARBECUE CELEBRATES FARMS ALONG THE HOUSATONIC

The Sheffield Land Trust highlighted two important conservation milestones on Sat., Aug. 19, at a community barbecue to celebrate two key projects in its Housatonic River Corridor initiative: the Griffiths and Larkin farms.

The event celebrated the state's approval of an APR (Agricultural Preservation Restriction) for Cold Spring Farm, owned by the daughters of the late Eleanor Griffiths. The 54-acre farm on Hewins St. is being purchased by Jim and June Wolfe, who plan to run it as a diversified organic farm with produce, livestock and honey. The Land Trust helped engineer the deal that brought together the landowners, the farm family and the state's funding in what Kathy Orlando, the Land Trust's executive director for land protection, says is an arrangement that benefits not just the property holders but the community at large.

Because getting Cold Spring Farm into the APR program will not only guarantee that a key parcel along the Housatonic remains agricultural, it also keeps the land open for wildlife habitat. "We just knew it was important to protect this," says Orlando.

The Aug. 19 community barbecue was held under a tent and cloudy skies just up Hewins St. from Cold Spring Farm, at Balsam Hill Farm, which itself joined the APR program three years ago with help from the Land Trust. The Wolfes introduced themselves to local residents and talked about their hopes for the farm. Former longtime Selectman Janet Griffiths Stanton, who inherited the farm with her two sisters when Eleanor Griffiths passed away in June 2003, talked



Hay rides down the road and around the farm were part of the Land Trust's community barbecue Aug. 19. Some 150 people attended.

about why her family wanted to see the land preserved as a farm. The event also celebrated the formal culmination in July of the Land Trust's efforts to preserve the Larkin family dairy farm in the northern part of the town. The farm's inclusion in the APR program was approved by the state in 2004; this July the state formally purchased the development rights to 350 acres of the farm.

The state's APR program helps preserve farmland by using state and federal funds to purchase development rights on agricultural land. That restricts the land from being used for anything other than agriculture and allows farmers to extract equity from their land instead of needing to sell it for development. The Sheffield Land Trust has helped purchase APRs on seven other farms in Sheffield, for a total of more than 1,200 acres, with several additional projects in progress.

The state program requires a "local contribution" for each APR from the town or the community, funds the Sheffield Land Trust must raise or the seller must

contribute. Board members at the picnic said the group has so far raised more than \$125,000 in contributions and pledges toward protection of the Griffiths farm. Orlando said the group needs to raise an additional \$62,000 before the September 15 closing date. That's when the Land Trust will pre-acquire the APR for the state and the Wolfes will purchase the property from Stanton and her two sisters, Sue Telensky of Sheffield and Gail August of Florida.

The Land Trust has to raise an additional \$128,000 after that date—the total fundraising required for the Griffiths project is \$318,000. The State Dept. of Agricultural Resources will eventually provide \$520,000. The Land Trust, using low-interest bridge funds from a foundation and a private conservation group, will pre-acquire the development rights and hold them until the state formally buys the rights sometime in the next three years.

The total cost of the project is \$1.34 million, including purchase of the land and

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Continued from page 1

the development rights and project costs (appraisals, surveys, legal and financing costs, project management). The difference between the total project cost and the state funds and local contributions comes from the Wolfes' purchase of the property for \$489,000 (including \$110,000 toward the APR), and Stanton and her sisters, who are contributing \$15,000 through a bargain sale price.

Future farmers

At the barbecue, June Wolfe introduced her two children, Seamus and Kristen, and mentioned Jim's two older children, Amelia and Jeremy (working and not able to attend) by saying, "These are our future farmers." "For Jim and the kids and myself, this is about fulfilling dreams," she said. "It's about working really, really hard to make our dreams come true." The family currently raises cows, pigs and chickens at their home in Ashley Falls, as well as tending honeybees and cultivating a large market garden. June and Jim were instrumental in starting the Sheffield Farmers' Market, where the family sells their produce, and is co-chair of Sheffield's Conservation Commission.

Jim's family farmed for many generations, and he grew up on the farm run by his father, Frank, in Great Barrington. He and June have for many years been

hoping to return to more intensive farming by moving to a larger property, preferably in Sheffield. They had been looking for land but, like many farmers, found that real-estate dynamics have made the price of prime agricultural land out of reach.

Ironically, Jim says his father's farm was the first in the county to go through the new APR program in the 1980s. The farm where he grew up was successfully preserved—it's now a thriving sheep farm owned by Lila and Peter Berle—but his family's experience following the acquisition of the APR was heartbreaking. The full financial implications of the new program had not been completely thought through. That, combined with some poor private accounting advice, led to Frank Wolfe's being forced to sell the farm to pay the steep capital gains taxes that resulted from selling the development rights. Since then, recommendations about doing estate and tax planning have been incorporated into the APR process to make sure families can maximize the benefits of the funds they receive for the development rights. Now Jim Wolfe will be connected to the APR program once again as it helps his family purchase a new farm. "I've come full circle," he noted.

The Wolfes plan to open a farm stand on Hewins St. to sell their organic produce, honey, eggs and meat. The long range plan: Seamus hopes someday to run a CSA (community-supported agriculture), a farm in which customers pre-pay for shares of food and pick up their food right at the farm.

Agricultural heritage

Janet Stanton said being able to keep her family's farm in agricultural use was "a treasure."

Continued on next page

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Cold Spring Farm seen here from Hewins St. near Shunpike Rd. will become a diversified organic farm protected under the Agricultural Preservation Restriction Program.



The field looking west from Boardman St. and Kellogg Rd., is across a newly protected field that is part of the Larkin dairy farm's 350-acre Agricultural Preservation Restriction that closed in July

"The farm is Sheffield," she said. "It's what Sheffield has been, and what we want it to be."

Stanton's great-grandfather, Patrick Hughes, came to Sheffield in 1868 as a 19-year-old from Ireland with nothing but the proverbial shirt on his back. Hughes worked as a farmhand for the Hewins family, and gradually saved enough to buy his own land. One of his children, Jim Hughes, inherited the farm, and Eleanor Griffiths was born and raised there. In the past the land has been a dairy farm and a horse farm. More recently, Eleanor raised dahlias, which she sold at a small stand in front of the house, while much of the land was rented to Bruce Goodchild for his Sheffield Sod Farm.

Eleanor passed away not long after the untimely death of her fourth daughter, Carol Olson, in January of 2003. Stanton, Telensky and August hoped to keep the land as a farm, but recognized that with high land values, it would be hard for any potential farmers to afford it.

Kathy Orlando recalled that she approached the sisters about preserving the land not long after Eleanor died. The

parcel could be a critical link in the Land Trust's effort to assemble a chain of protected farms and wildlife habitat along the Housatonic River through the heart of Sheffield—an effort the Land Trust calls its Housatonic River Corridor Agricultural and Ecological Initiative.

Orlando noted at the community picnic that farms are an integral part of Sheffield, and the effort to keep prime agricultural soils available for farming is critical for many reasons, including preserving the town's character. "This landscape would not be maintained without the farmers," she noted.

Larkin farm now conserved

The event also marked an important milestone in preserving the Larkin family dairy farm, a \$2.3 million conservation project. The state officially bought development rights cover-

ing seven separate lots of the family's farm along or near the Route 7 Housatonic corridor—at Kellogg Rd. and Boardman St., off Sheffield-Egremont Rd. down to Mill Pond, and just over the line in Great Barrington). The parcels—mostly planted in corn and hay, but with some pasture and a barn too—total 350 acres. Jim Larkin grew up on his grandfather's farm on Lime Kiln Rd., now owned by Arthur Batacchi, Jr. The Batacchi farm is now leased by the Larkins as part of their current dairy operation. The preserved farmland was acquired parcel by parcel over 40 years by Jim Larkin and his wife, Margaret, who works as the school nurse at Undermountain Elementary.

Jim was a partner with his uncle, Arthur Batacchi Sr., for 26 years, then with Arthur Batacchi, Jr. for 15 years, until buying him out in 2004. Jim now operates Larkin Farm, LLC with Margaret and their son, Jimmy.

Participating in the APR program, says Jim Larkin, is enabling the family to stay in business as farmers. With the cash influx, they will be able to pay off debt from buying out the prior Batacchi

farm partnership, as well as the year-to-year debt that many farmers incur when they have to borrow against future revenues to get their crops in and maintain equipment. Larkin will put the rest of the funds into infrastructure, such as new barns that will improve the farm's efficiency and sustainability.

Larkin says he sees the APR program as a win-win prospect, allowing him to maintain his commitment to farming and also helping the town. "It was either that or do like others farmers do—they sell and they go somewhere else" where land values are much lower, Larkin said.

Jimmy Larkin, who is president of the Berkshire County Farmers Bureau, told those at the picnic that farmers in the Northeast are under tremendous pressure, squeezed between rising costs and prices, particularly for dairy, that don't cover costs. He asked residents to lobby state lawmakers to support legislation to help farmers. "We want to enlist your support to help dairy farmers because we're all in a cash crunch right now," he said.

The Larkins donated the entire local contribution for their APR—more than \$400,000. Orlando praised the family's desire to contribute and said it underlined their determination to secure their farm and support the community. Said Jim Larkin, "I want to see the character of the town maintained. I know what it was like 50 years ago."

—Sheryl Lechner



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THE PEOPLE WHO HELP MAKE SHEFFIELD WORK: JIM AND CATHERINE MILLER

Over the years, Jim and Catherine Miller have contributed many hours to volunteer work, enriching our community in numerous ways not only here in Sheffield and in Berkshire County but also nationally and internationally. Both credit their parents, Catherine her father and Jim his mother, for instilling in them early in their lives both a desire to volunteer and a sense that they should give back to the communities in which they live.

JIM MILLER

With a masters in history and many years experience as a secondary school social sciences and English teacher, Jim not surprisingly has been drawn to volunteer work defined by history and education. Soon after moving to Sheffield from Great Barrington in 1971, the Millers joined the Sheffield Historical Society, an organization in which they have been involved for over 35 years. Jim has a strong respect for Sheffield's history and a commitment to the preservative and educational functions of the organization. He has held all offices of the organization except that of vice president.

During his presidency, the Society completed mortgage payments on the Dan Raymond House and the Mark Dewey Research Center was renovated, opening in 1990. Jim contributed to its growth and expansion over the years, not only helping to collect data but actively sharing information through exhibits in the library and the Old Stone Store and through articles in the SHS newsletter and in the Sheffield Times. He continues to devote many hours to the center where he has served as director, archivist and volunteer, responding to telephone, mail, e-mail and walk-in inquiries from local residents and across the country and even abroad. His book, *Early Life in Sheffield*, published in 2002, grew out of his research there.

Jim currently chairs the Festival of Trees and is co-chair of the silent auction and tag sale. Both endeavors are essential to the \$40,000 in annual fundraising that the Society must do to support its activities.



Sheffield residents Jim and Catherine Miller

For many years Jim has served as president of the Board of the Center Cemetery, a privately endowed cemetery on Berkshire School Rd. He spearheaded the restoration of the Barnard Chapel, supported by a grant from Columbia University. From time to time he leads cemetery tours for the Historical Society and, with Betty Chapin, he supplies the information for the popular "Spirits of Sheffield" enactments that occur in a designated cemetery each October. With Tammy Blackwell, he established the Sheffield Cemetery Project to repair cemetery stones and improve conditions of cemeteries maintained by the town. Repairs of the Barnard Cemetery, the Churchill Cemetery on Salisbury Rd., and the Hewins St. Cemetery have been completed.

Although he worked in commercial agriculture and real estate after retiring as a teacher, Jim continued to volunteer time and attention to the educational needs of our community. He held four terms as an elected member of the Sheffield School Committee. It was during his last term that the regional campus was developed. He is currently on the Aurigan Scholarship Committee, which oversees the distribution of scholarships at the Mt. Everett graduation.

On the county level, Jim has been a longtime member of the board of directors of the historic Bidwell House museum in Monterey, and for almost 20 years he has volunteered with the Berkshire County Cancer Society, driving

patients to medical appointments. He began the latter activity because he was thankful for similar help given to his parents when his father was ill with cancer years ago.

During a trekking trip to Nepal in the 1990s, Jim was taken with the beauty of the land and the inner beauty of the Nepalese people. In 2000 he returned to Nepal for three months to teach English as a

second language through Hands in Outreach, a Sheffield-based organization that raises money to support the education and medical care of 200 Nepalese students at risk in the Katmandu Valley. He continues to volunteer for the organization, helping with their bookkeeping and donor records.

Why does he volunteer? He sees it as "a learning opportunity and a very rewarding part of my life educationally and emotionally." He adds that "to do volunteer work consistently you have to enjoy it."

CATHERINE MILLER

Catherine has been involved in so many volunteer activities over the years, it is hard to believe that there is only one of her! For over 30 years, she has been a committed contributor of time, energy, ideas and financial support in the fields of health, theater, music, education and historical preservation, as well as in town organizations and at Christ Church.

A roster of the boards of directors she has served on highlights her interests: Berkshire United Way, 1980-85; Sheffield Historical Society 1980-1986, 1997-2000; Community Health Programs (formerly Children's Health Program), 1990-1996, 1999-2005; Barrington Stage Company, 1997-2005; American Red Cross, 1980-2001; and Berkshire Choral Festival, 2003-present.

Catherine's volunteer activities began in the 1970s, when she was dean at Simon's Rock College in Great Barrington, and volunteered for Challenge for Youth, an organization helping young people at risk. Much of her volunteer work has

been on the county and national level, but she has also been involved in Sheffield efforts for the past 35 years, most notably the Sheffield Historical Society, where she has served as president, vice president, treasurer, investment manager and chair of the Old Stone Store Restoration Committee. She was involved in the renovations of the Dan Raymond House and the Dewey Center. Currently she is on the organization's Finance Committee.

In addition, she has been a member of the Sheffield Planning Board (in the 1970s), the Sheffield Council of Aging and the first Sheffield Building Committee. For 12 years she ran the Red Cross blood drives in town. For eight years she was an overseer for Landmark Volunteers, helping with high school students who worked on clearing invasive species, building Schenob Brook bridges and other projects in Sheffield.

In 1980 Catherine became involved with Berkshire United Way and the American Red Cross, rising in the latter organization from the Berkshire County chapter board to the Eastern operations chair to the national board of governors in 1995. As a member of the national board, she chaired many committees and task forces for the organization and she served as national facilitator for chapter and board development. She advanced to become first vice-chair of the national organization in 1999, traveling often to Washington to deal with national and international issues. Her contributions have been recognized by the Red Cross with four awards: the Lucia V. Alberti Outstanding Volunteer Award in 1986, the Clara Barton Meritorious Volunteer Leadership award in 1990, the Cynthia Wedel Distinguished Volunteer Service Award in 1994 and the Northeast Blood Region Outstanding Volunteer award for 1997-8.

From her work as dean at Simon's Rock, Catherine brings educational, personnel and organizational skills to her volunteer work. From her second career as partner and vice-president at Wheeler and Taylor, an insurance and real-estate brokerage in Great Barrington, until her retirement nine years ago, she brings financial, marketing and business expertise. Not surprisingly, she has been on the finance, development, strategic planning, fundraising, building, budget or investment committees of almost all the organizations with which she has been

GOOD CITIZENS

Volunteer work is often done quietly, not always recognized outside the organizations involved. Yet Sheffield depends on its volunteers—those who contribute time and energy to town committees, to various town organizations, to school and church community outreach, and also to this newspaper. This is the first of an on-going series profiling the people whose volunteer efforts make Sheffield—the town, the community—work.

involved. Ten years ago she was asked by the School Committee to lead a group to consider ways in which to supplement the school budget to support additional activities and projects. That led her to become a founding member and chair of the Eagle Fund in 1997. With Jim, she made an initial investment in the fund that was matched by a corporation; now an annual appeal raises \$12,000 to \$15,000 each year.

Currently, Catherine chairs a committee working to raise money for a new facility for CHP (Community Health Programs), a Great Barrington-based organization with which she has been involved since the early 1990s. CHP provides health and family services for anyone who resides in South County, regardless of ability to pay.

In 2005 Catherine was appointed by the town of Sheffield to the Southern

Berkshire Regional School Committee, where she served on the finance, audit, policy and executive evaluation subcommittees. Recently, she was elected chair of the School Committee. This is a different kind of experience from her other volunteer activities, and she finds it "challenging." She hopes to help improve the school's public relations and marketing.

Catherine believes that to be an effective board member or volunteer, one has to believe in the mission of the organization. She particularly enjoys long-term planning, policy-making and board facilitation. Based on her extensive board experience, she tries to help boards function more efficiently and help board committees find more effective ways of problem solving.

Catherine feels that volunteering has made her a richer person. She says, "I have been blessed in this life and I want to give back. I enjoy engaging with bright, creative people to make a positive difference."

Perhaps to balance the serious work that she does with all these organizations and committees, Catherine has made another, lighter volunteer commitment. For the past four or five years she has been a part the Glory Be Clown Troupe, which visits hospitals, nursing homes, senior centers and churches. She says it is "fun and an opportunity to bring a smile to someone's face just by acting like a fool." —Ellen Rowntree

'BERKSHARES' START END OF SEPTEMBER

A local currency designed to build the economy of the southern Berkshires will start circulating at the end of September. The program has been developed by BerkShares, Inc., a non-profit organization working with the Southern Berkshire Chamber of Commerce. It's hoped that their use will strengthen local enterprises, manufacturing and jobs and reduce the region's dependence on "an unpredictable global economy."

Citizens can exchange federal dollars for BerkShares—available in amounts of 1, 5, 10, 20 and 50—at the Sheffield and Egremont branches of Salisbury Bank and at the Great Barrington offices of Berkshire, Lee, and Pittsfield Coop banks. For the most part, the currency will be accepted at face value by participating stores and services (though some restrictions may apply). Each BerkShare

will cost 90 cents, meaning goods or services bought with the currency will be discounted by 10 percent.

Participating retailers will display signs saying "BerkShares accepted here." Businesses are still signing up (and those interested can do so by visiting the web site or calling the number below). So far, they include Sheffield's Carpetclean and Moon in the Pond Farm and many stores and restaurants in Great Barrington, from the Berkshire Coop and Church Street Trading Company to Castle Street Café and Pearl's Restaurant.

According to BerkShares, local currencies were widely used 100 years ago and are now being recognized as a tool to promote sustainable economic development. For more information on the program, call 528-1737 or go to www.BerkShares.org.

SHEFFIELD REAL ESTATE: 'SLOWEST SUMMER SINCE 1995'

Like the rest of South County, Sheffield has seen a dramatic slowing of its real estate market this year. "It's the slowest summer since 1995," says Mel Greenberg, owner of Alford Farm Realty. "There are a significant number of houses on the market at significantly too high prices."

The middle is the weak part of the market, he said. "People who live here are buying the houses priced at \$200,000 to the high \$300,000s. And at the very top of the market, the houses priced at \$1.5 to \$2 or \$3 million—if the people who buy those houses are in the market, they'll buy a house."

Dick Krzynowek, president of Is-good Realty, agrees. "Most of the demand is in the \$150,000 to \$250,000 price range, and in Sheffield, almost nothing is in that range—it's all Pittsfield and north. Properties down here are typically \$500,000 and up, the most sluggish part of the market. He says the business is "no fun these days, after three or four excellent years." The number of Sheffield properties sold so far this year is not that different from the number sold up to

August 15 in the last couple of years, but he's sure it will be by the end of the year. "There are 46 properties on the market right now," he says, "and the average number of days on the market is now 207, longer than it was previously."

Sandra Preston at Sandra Preston Real Estate says that business has been very quiet this summer and that the market slowdown "is to be expected after the run we've had." She went on, "Usually summers aren't wild. Usually after September 15 and before Thanksgiving we're very busy."

Rita Stevens at Berkshire Estates Realty also says that the market has definitely slowed down, not surprising given rising interest rates. She's also noted an increase in year-round rentals. "More local people are needing to rent," she said. "They can't afford to buy. They're looking for rentals with heat and hot water included so they have a stable budget."

"A lot of properties have been on the market for six, eight, ten months—some over a year," says Bob Van Deusen at Sheffield Realty. "Right now, the market

is flooded and prices haven't dropped that much." Having been in the business for nearly 40 years, Bob is optimistic. "It's a trend, we go in cycles." He predicts, "Next spring, you'll see a difference. The Berkshires are a desirable place to live, and buyers will come back." —Andrea Scott

WORKSHOP ON CHRONIC HEALTH PROBLEMS

Lawrence and Margo Davis-Hollander, ontological life coaches working under the name Dynamic Change, are offering four workshops for patients and families of those suffering from chronic health conditions. The workshops will start Thurs., Sept. 28, at the NOAH (New Opportunities for Alternative Healing) Center, 401 Stockbridge Road, Great Barrington. To register, call the center at 528-0297. For more information on this and other programs, call the Davis Hollanders at 423-229-8316 or 413-446-3562.

FUNDRAISING FOR FIREHOUSE EXPANSION

The Sheffield Volunteer Hose Company is starting to raise money to fund the expansion of the Sheffield firehouse. The expansion, approved at an April 2005 meeting of the Zoning Board of Appeals, will allow the next fire truck, a larger tanker that can carry more water, to fit into the building. The plans include a 30x30 addition on the east side of the existing building and a second floor built over the existing structure. The addition will provide two more bays for larger trucks. The new second story will be made into a kitchen area, bunk quarters, bathrooms and office areas for the chief of the Fire Dept. and the president of the Hose Company.

"We want to make this addition fit into the character of the existing building," says David Ullrich, president of the Hose Company.

This isn't the first time the building has needed remodeling to fit a larger truck. Chief Rick Boardman says that

the last truck, bought in 1994, required enlarging the garage doors. But there's no more room to expand in length or height," he says. "I'm 100 percent for the expansion. Our current station is too small."

The Sheffield Hose Company No. 1, in continuous existence since 1896, is a private organization that owns and maintains the fire station but receives no tax money. It raises money through such events as golf outings and the annual pancake breakfast.

The Sheffield Fire Dept. is part of the town government, and the volunteer firefighters are appointed by the Board of Selectmen. The town provides and maintains the fire trucks and equipment. Based on a 20-year replacement cycle, the next truck is due in 2008.

The Hose Company will take any advice from Sheffield residents that will make the fundraising effort work. "We understand this will not happen without cooperation of the community," David says.

DON'T MISS IT!

Silent Auction

**Sat., October 7th
10am—4pm**

*It's too early to say exactly
how many lots. We just
know you'll love the many
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SHEFFIELD IN CELEBRATION STREET FAIR SET FOR SEPT. 9

The 6th annual Sheffield Fair will be held on Sat., Sept. 9, from 3-7pm on the Green off Route 7 in the center of Sheffield. With a focus of reinvesting in the community, the celebration will highlight the ongoing capital campaigns for the Volunteer Hose Company #1 and Old Parish Church.

The food court is bigger than ever this year and, yes, the Senior Center Salad Bar is back. Selections will include salads and burgers, baked goods and fried dough—and wonderful fresh local corn on the cob to eat at the fair, as well as locally grown produce you can take home.

Bring your dancing shoes along with your appetite. At 3pm, music for the fair will be kicked off by local favorite Tom Ingersoll, who is also serving as music coordinator and event MC. He'll be followed by Adam Rothberg at 3:55pm and Kelly Hagan at 4:45pm. The Bobby Sweet Trio will do a double set from 5:30-7pm. (And the music will continue into the evening, at the Kiwanis Steak Roast and a benefit for Old Parish; see page 11 for more.)

The exhibit and vendor booths will feature woodwork and boatbuilding, jewelry and sachets, clothing, cards, homespun yarn, pottery, artwork, plants and more. Main Street merchants, including the Sheffield Market, Silk's Variety, Neighborgoods Local Creations, the Village Green and South Main Clothing Outlet, will also be open for business, some with special Celebration offerings.

Old Parish will be doing tours of the restored church as well as hosting its "Treasure Chest" sale. The Sheffield Historical Society will highlight the "If They Close the Door, Come in the Window" exhibit at the Old Stone Store (see page 24 for more). The Sheffield Land Trust and Sheffield Tree Project will be on hand with maps and information for fairgoers; you can add your favorite Sheffield locale to the Land Trust's Places of the Heart map or learn about tree plantings in Sheffield and Ashley Falls.

The Sheffield Senior Center and Boy Scouts will have information on their programs as well. Classic and muscle cars will be on display. Commemorative tiles, donated by Sheffield Pottery, will be available at the Sheffield Association table.

The Boy Scout climbing wall and the hayride will be back. And there will be lots of other activities for kids, including a crafts table, face painting, a hay maze and peanuts-in-a-haystack treasure hunt. Kids can try their hand at the cider press. And don't be surprised if a clown pops up to make you smile.

This year, the Kiwanis Steak Roast at the Fire House (see page 23 for details) will follow the fair as a joint fundraiser for Kiwanis and the Sheffield Hose Company. Steaks will be served from 5:30 to 7:30 pm.

During the fair, the Green will be closed to traffic. Kiwanis volunteers will be on hand to show fairgoers where to park.

During the week of celebrating Sheffield, there are other events. The Farmers Market of Sheffield runs Fri., Sept. 8 and 15, 3:30-6:30pm, selling

fresh local produce, flowers, cheese, baked goods, organic meats and more. On Sept. 15, there is also a full day of activities surrounding the inauguration of the Upper Housatonic River African American Heritage Trail (see page 12 for details).

Volunteers are still welcome and booths are still available. For more information on the Celebration and Sheffield Fair, contact Dave Smith (229-9956); for the Food Court contact Barb Davidson (229-8091).

Thanks to all the businesses, organizations and individuals who are giving time and contributions to make this event possible. Special thanks to corporate sponsors Sheffield Pottery and Salisbury Bank and Trust and benefactor DeVries Building Supply. A complete list of contributors will appear in the next issue of the Sheffield Times.

TACONIC LEARNING CENTER CLASSES

It's fall and time to think about going back to school at the Taconic Learning Center. Enroll in one of the wonderful classes offered by TLC. The fall semester is about to begin. Courses will be given on opera, Mozart, the Crusades, the culture of China and more. Classes are held around the area, many at Geer Vil-

lage or Noble Horizons. A play-reading class will be held in Sheffield at Dewey Memorial Hall on Tuesday afternoons. Registration/membership forms can be obtained at www.taconiclearningcenter.org, or by writing or calling: TLC, PO Box 1752, Lakeville CT 06039, (860) 435-2922.



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ASHLEY FALLS: THE SHANGRI-LA OF SHEFFIELD?

A lot of people get lost in Ashley Falls. Mary at the post office can always tell who's lost by their lost expression. She gets them unlost, it's not her job but it sells more stamps. When the post office is closed and you're lost, you're outta luck.

The signs leading to Ashley Falls may not be much help. If you're driving south on Route 7, just past the Sunrise Diner, a big green and white sign points "Rt. 7/Canaan Conn." to the left. Below it another big green and white sign pointed "Rt. 7A/Ashley Falls, Mass." to the right. The Ashley Falls part of the sign fell down in February or March and has lain in the grass, facing up, ever since. It's a big sign—Deb Segalla can read it from her plane en route to the airstrip in Canaan, but if you're wondering where 7A/Ashley Falls is from a car or a bicycle, forget it.

To approach Ashley Falls from Salisbury, CT, via "The Meryl Streep Scenic Route," you drive through the Taconic Village center and up Cooper Hill, stopping to take in the view at the top and staying right at the old Malnati farm. A rusty white sign with rusty black letters points with rusty arrows to Ashley Falls on the right.

Shangri-la wasn't well marked either.

In 1724, when Col. Ashley paid Chief Konkapot more gold and rum than did Peter Minuet for Manhattan, Ashley Falls became a commercial center on the main road. Beginning in the 1840s, Ashley Falls was a busy railroad depot. It was easy to get here then—there were four passenger trains daily from New York City. A one-way ticket to Ashley Falls cost 15 cents in 1915.

By the 1920s, Route 7 was the main road through the Berkshires and north to Vermont. The first Ashley Falls bypass was built to bridge the dangerous railroad grade crossing just north of the village center. This Depression Era concrete bridge skirted what is now the dead-ended Railroad St. Before this bypass, Emrick Schenk's barn was behind his house. Today his barn, the old Whistle Stop/Organic Herb Barn has prime commercial frontage and his house is behind the barn. Just south of the Davis-Hollanders on the west side, you can still see the old main road slowly reverting to nature. The overpass is now deteriorated and to be replaced at the railroad's expense within five years.

The Route 7 highway bypass happened during the massive road building of the post-WWII automobile age. Opened in 1961, for the first time in 250 years Ashley Falls became a back road hamlet of Sheffield. A new era began and village life was dramatically changed forever.

The Route 7 bypass cut through the rich agricultural farmland and the flood plain of the Housatonic, requiring its road bed to be greatly raised. Suddenly, parts of Ashley Falls were harder to get to, especially at the Wilhelm Farm. The road cut the farm down the middle, so the road builders created an underpass to allow the farm tractors to get to the fields on the east. Too bad they didn't make it wide enough for the equipment pulled behind the tractor (harrows, spreaders, etc.) to get through. Natalie Funk remembers being pregnant and pushing a stroller up the rocky



embankment to cross the new highway to see the family on the new "other side of 7." Hewins St. used to come directly into the Ashley Falls village center, and everybody south of Pike Rd. (Hulett Hill Rd.) knew they lived in A.F.

Gas was cheap and the new highway got you someplace other than Ashley Falls, fast. That section of Route 7, especially where 7A rejoins 7 on the north, was, and still is, a dangerous piece of road. Check the statistics: two dead in 2006 already.

Whether Ashley Falls was a "well-preserved quiet New England village with town green and post office" or "colonial slum," by the 1960s the train didn't stop here anymore. Cheap real estate and good old American

stuff attracted the antiques dealers, who moved in and lived above, and behind, their shops. Signage was freshly painted and accurately encouraged you off the main road to "7 separate shops." There were 14 active businesses on the white ladder sign which is still there though only two of the firms are still in business. On weekends cars would be parked all around the village green and business was brisk. Independent dealers of solid reputation sold real New England antiques, well researched and authenticated, even if they did sell them in their bathrobes. Lois Spring was the last active antiques dealer on the way to Ashley Falls. She sold antiques out of her beautiful place for 45 years, and when she died in 2004, another era of Ashley Falls quietly disappeared.

Ashley Falls is strategically important. It's our southernmost gateway, the Banana Belt of the Berkshires, where the dry martinis and salted nuts of the Litchfield Hills meet the wine and granola of the Berkshires. Today, nobody can imagine what would have become of our little village without the Route 7 bypass. Many villagers would prefer all the signs to rust, fade away, fall down or get stolen...except Mary at the post office. Her arms are tired from pointing the way out of town. —Richard Cherneff

SHIMINSKI-MAHER AWARDED

Tania Shiminski-Maher, a 1977 graduate of Mt. Everett Regional School and daughter of Sheffield residents Jim and Barbara Shiminski, received the 2006 Columbia University Distinguished Alumni Award for nursing practice. A pediatric nurse practitioner specializing in pediatric neurology and pediatric neuro-oncology, Tania graduated from Columbia in 1981. She began her career at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center and now works at Montefiore Medical Center. She has also shared her clinical concerns in many clinical publications and presentations and was the lead author of a book about central nervous system tumors.

One physician colleague who has known Tania for 20 years said this: "There are few people in our specialty whom I have seen who has had an impact on patients and families to the degree Tania has."

NEWS FROM SOUTHERN BERKSHIRE REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

As the school year starts up again, it's a good time to appreciate the Little School District That Can and Does provide wonderful educational opportunities for the children of the five towns that comprise it. Here are some of last year's accomplishments:

Thirteen of the 47 graduating seniors qualified for the Chancellor's Scholarship, a four-year tuition-paid education at the University of Massachusetts.

Ten of those same seniors graduated cum laude, having achieved an academic average of at least 90 percent and having participated in community service.

The three highest Great Barrington Rotary Club scholarships were awarded to Mt. Everett students.

All students in grades K-10 have an "individual learning plan" and all students in grades 3-10 have "individual math plans" accessible to parents and teachers as well as the student, with resources to support the student's plan. The additional emphasis on the development of mathematical skills aims to bring them up to the same level or better as students' language arts skills.

The high school band received "excellent" and "superior" ratings at the Western Dixie Competition held in Virginia Beach, VA.

Students constructed and exhibited a solar vehicle in the Tour de Sol and received first place in several categories. The spring concert of the chorus saw the group perform a varied and complex program that included a classical piece with a chamber orchestra.

Many of the athletic teams reached division playoffs, some

achieving levels greater than ever before seen in the school. Over 100 senior citizens from our communities attended a holiday luncheon and concert, an event planned and hosted by the students.

Nearly 70 percent of the students in grades 3-12 participated in one or more of the five theater productions as actors, assistant directors, musicians, stage hands, or assisted with costumes, lighting, or sound.

The Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) test results were stronger than the previous year and exceeded those of other districts in the area.

Students raised over \$10,000 for children of the 2004 tsunami; the money was used to create a portable reading program/library that has become a model throughout Thailand, Vietnam and Japan.

Seven students will be participating in the Virtual High School during 2007 through the South Berkshire Educational Collaborative, thereby allowing them to experience courses that would not otherwise be available.

Several students have worked with local landscapers and arborists to improve the Mt. Everett site and begin to develop an arboretum (see the May/June issue of the Sheffield Times). A host of students, assisted by faculty, staff and the culinary arts department, presented the second annual Madrigal Feast, a magical evening enjoyed by many members of the community. And the list goes on and will continue to do so!

—Catherine Miller

Miller is chair of the School Committee



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FREEDOM

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- Aug. 21 Mum Bett Day. Proclamation read on the steps of the Great Barrington Town Hall, site of the courthouse where Bett won her lawsuit. 2PM.
- Sept. 15 Inauguration of the Upper Housatonic Valley African American Heritage Trail with a bus tour, ending at the Ashley House. Visit www.uhvafamtrail.org for information.
- Sept. 15 Symposium, "If They Close the Door on You, Go in the Window" Sheffield Historical Society (413/229.2694)
- Exhibit at Sheffield Historical Society's Old Stone Store, weekends through October 29. Free.

Exhibit & symposium funded in part by the
Massachusetts Foundation for the Humanities.

NOURSES AND PHIL BOARDMAN HONORED

Husband and wife "Doc" and Kathy ("Katie") Nourse and Phil Boardman, all well known in Sheffield for their community service, each received awards recently. On June 2, Doc, a former U.S. Navy corpsman, and Phil, a U.S. Army veteran, were given Special Awards for Outstanding and Meritorious Service by American Legion Post No. 340 (Sheffield's Legion Post) in recognition of their valuable contributions to the Post. Doc is chief financial officer and Phil a service officer. Both participate actively in the Post's management and projects.

Not to be outdone, on July 11, Kathy was presented with the Individual Meritorious Commendation Award of Detachment 042 of the Marine Corps League (based in Canaan) for her countless hours of hard work spent on events ranging from fundraising, parades, wakes and funerals to writing the detachment's newsletter and acting as adjutant. Also, she was cited for her role as quartermas-



Kathy and Doc Nourse with their daughter, Tammy, at a birthday celebration for Doc held several weeks before the awards ceremony. Kathy also held a raffle that night to benefit soldiers in the Gulf.

ter providing supplies in the form of her famous home-baked deserts.

An associate member of the League, Kathy was complimented by the master of ceremonies for "volunteering where and when she was needed, in Marine Corps' fashion." —Peter Rowntree

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CHURCH NEWS

Local musicians to perform in benefit for Old Parish. Neighborgoods, the store for Sheffield-made crafts and wares located on Main St., will be presenting a concert featuring Sheffield's own Tom Ingersoll, Kelly Hagan, Bobby Sweet and Adam Rothberg. The concert is a fundraiser for the Old Parish Church Capital Campaign and will take place at the church on Sept. 9 at 8pm, just after the Kiwanis Steak Roast that follows the Sheffield in Celebration street fair. Tickets are \$12 for adults and \$7 for kids 5-12. Save \$2 per ticket by buying them in advance at Neighborgoods. Store hours are Fri. noon-6:30, Mon. and Sat. 10-4, Sun. noon-4.

All proceeds will go directly to the capital campaign. Look for a great evening of locally grown tunes! For more information, call the store during business hours at 229-5941.

Christ Church hosts silent auction. Save Oct. 7 for Christ Church Episcopal's silent auction, 10am to 4pm. By popular demand, frozen casseroles will be among the items being auctioned. Lunch will be served.

Food Program thanks the Sheffield Farmers' Market. The summer season is ending and the Farmers' Market has given us a tremendous assortment of cookies and breads and vegetables and fruits. Thank you, neighbors. The shelves are emptying. Please think of the Food Program when you shop or clean out your shelves of purchases that never got used. Our wish list for September: soup, cereal, rice and pasta mixes and tomato sauce. You can drop donations in the barrel at Berkshire Bank, Sheffield Branch, during business hours.

THE SHEFFIELD TIMES WANTS YOU!

Send us your news, stories or photos. Submissions and suggestions can be sent to sheffieldtimes@hotmail.com or P.O. Box 1339, Sheffield, MA 01257

RELIGIOUS SERVICES

ASHLEY FALLS

Greenwoods Community Church (non-denominational)

355 Clayton Road (413) 229-8560; parsonage (860) 824-7442.

Sunday: 9:30am Sunday School (ages 3-adult); 10:30am Worship Service, nursery care provided; Rev. Edward M. Eastman Jr., Pastor

Trinity Methodist (United Methodist)

1156 Ashley Falls Road (413) 229-2712. Sunday: 9am Service. Pastor Betty LeGeyt

GREAT BARRINGTON

Congregation Ahavath Shalom (reconstructionist)

North Street (413) 528-4197

Friday, 8pm & Saturday, 10am. Services are not held every week. Schedules are updated weekly on the answering machine, including special services.

Hevreh of Southern Berkshire

270 State Road (413) 528-6378

Friday: 7:30pm Shabbat Service; Saturday: 10am Shabbat service & Torah study. Rabbi Deborah Zecher, Assistant Rabbi Andrew Klein

Trinity Lutheran

198 Main Street

(413) 528-1330. Sunday: 9am Sunday Worship. Rev. Steve Edmiston

Unitarian Universalist Meeting of South Berkshire

Meet at the United Methodist Church, 198 Main Street (413) 528-4850; home (413) 528-3106. Sunday: 5pm. Rev. Kathy Duhon

SHEFFIELD

Christ Church (Episcopal)

180 Main Street (413) 229-8811

Sunday: 8am & 10am Holy Eucharist; 10am Sunday School & childcare; Thursday: 10am Holy Eucharist & Healing. Rev. Anne Ryder.

Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses

Route 7 & Kellogg Road (413) 229-8649. The public is welcome.

Faith Baptist

640 North Main Street (413) 229-0400 Sunday: 9:45am Sunday School; 10:45am

Worship Service; 6pm Bible Study; Wednesday: 7pm Mid-week Service; Pastor L.V. Morris.

Old Parish (Congregational)

125 Main Street (413) 229-8173 Sunday: 10am Worship. Interim Pastor: Frances Ruthven; Sunday School, 10am

Our Lady of the Valley (Catholic)

Maple Avenue (413) 229-3028; Saturday: 4:00pm Mass; Sunday: Sheffield 7:30am, 9am Masses; Mill River 10:30 Mass. Rev. John S. Lis

Sheffield Chapel (non-denominational)

1970 N. Main Street, www.sheffieldchapel.org, (413) 528-2911. www.sheffieldchapel.org. 10:45am Sunday Morning Worship. 9:30am Sunday School for all ages. Tuesdays: Group Prayer Time 7pm. Interim Pastor: George Karl, Jr.

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AFRICAN AMERICAN HERITAGE TRAIL TO BE INAUGURATED IN SEPT.

On Sept. 15 at 8am, three motor coaches will depart from the Second Congregational Church in Pittsfield and travel three different routes that explore important sites to the Upper Housatonic Valley's African American heritage. The tours will all culminate at the Col. Ashley House in Ashley Falls, where the dedication of the heritage trail will take place at 3:30. "Mum Bett," a slave in the household of Col Ashley, overheard him and other local landowners' discussions of freedom and was inspired to sue, successfully, for her own. All buses will return to Pittsfield by 5:45pm. Box lunches will be provided.

The Sheffield trip will include a symposium to be held at Old Parish Church. Speakers will be: JoAnne Pope Melish, author of *Disowning Slavery: Gradual Emancipation and "Race" in New England, 1780-1860*; Margaret L. Vetare, director of interpretation, Historic Hudson Valley; and South Berkshire residents Elaine Gunn and Wray Gunn. There will also be a chance to visit the Sheffield Historical Society's exhibit at the Old Stone Store, "If They Close the Door on You, Go in the Window."

The Great Barrington bus will stop for a walking tour of Great Barrington sites, including the W.E.B. Du Bois boyhood home, and the Pittsfield bus will stop for a walking tour

African American Heritage Trail Inauguration

When: September 15, 8am, gathering at 7am

Where: Three motor coaches will depart from the Second Congregational Church in Pittsfield

How: To sign up for one of the tours, contact the Sheffield Historical Society (see page 24) or Rachel Fletcher at 528-3391 or afamtrail@hotmail.com

of Heritage Trail sites in that city.

To sign up for one of the tours, contact the Sheffield Historical Society (see page 24) or Rachel Fletcher at 528-3391 or afamtrail@hotmail.com. Registration is required. Cost: \$25; seniors, \$20. (See related story on page 24.)

Other events in the celebration include an event announcing the publication of a 250-page trail guide on Sept. 14 at the Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts in North Adams; a gospel festival at Church Street Center Auditorium on Sept. 15 at 8pm in North Adams; and a national conference Sept. 14-17, also at the MCLA campus, and a special private tour of the W. E. B. Du Bois Homesite on Oct. 7 (reservations required). For more information, see www.uhvafamtrail.org.

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BARTHOLOMEW'S COBBLE EVENTS

World Music on Hurlburt's Hill. Sat., Sept. 23. Two Berkshire County-based musicians team up to bring sounds from around the world to the Cobble Inspired by folkloric music from many different traditions, Nana Simopoulos of World Music of Nana and Aimee Gelinas of Gaia Roots blend vocal harmonies with percussion rhythms and exotic instruments to create a unique weave of traditional music and original creations. The concert will feature instrumentation such as the Indian Sitar, Greek Byzantine Bouzouki, Australian didgeridoo, Sufi frame drums and Afro-Cuban drums with beautiful vocal arrangements in various world languages.

Come early and bring a picnic or linger after to enjoy the sunset. Please allow at least 45 minutes before and after the event for travel to and from the concert site. In case of rain the concert will be at the Visitor's Center. Members \$10. Nonmembers \$12. Children under 12 FREE.

Canoe Trips. Sept. 17-Oct. 1. 9:30-12:30; Oct. 7-21, 10am-1pm; Mon., Oct. 9, 10am-1pm. Guided natural history canoe trips on the Housatonic. Pre-register. Members: adult \$20, child \$10. Nonmembers: adult \$30, child \$15

Owl Prowl. Sat., October 14 & 21, 7:30-9:30pm owls hunt swiftly, accurately and silently in the dead of night. Learn how they do it! Pres-register. Members: adult \$4, child FREE. Nonmembers: adult \$6, child \$2.

To find out more about these and other activities, go to www.thetrustees.org or call the Cobble at 229-8600.

SHEFFIELD TIMES STAFF CELEBRATE FIVE YEARS OF COMMUNITY PUBLISHING



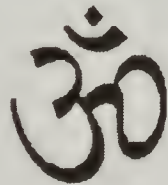
It takes a lot of people to bring you the Sheffield Times. Some of them, and their significant others, recently gathered at a party celebrating the fifth anniversary of the "second generation" of the Times. The "first generation" occurred in the early 1990s, when the Times was published for a few years under the leadership of Susannah Leigh.

The Sheffield Times wants you!
See page 11 for details.



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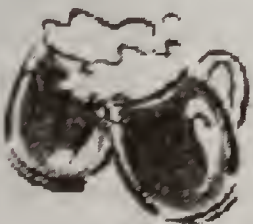


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A PROUD MEMBER OF BERKSHIRE GROWN

NEW STATUE AT LIBRARY HONORS THE FIRST DIRECTOR

A bust of Willard C. French, the first full-time paid director of the Bushnell-Sage Library, has been installed in the library lobby by the elevator. It was dedicated on Aug. 6. About 35 people attended the ceremony.

The sculpture, by the late James O. Saunders, was donated by Willard's son, Jack French, of Sheffield. The presentation case (built by Dale Smith) and a memorial plaque were donated by Willard's daughter, Martha (French), and her husband, Ted Somes, of Leesburg, FL. Jack and Martha and other members of the French family were on hand for the dedication, including Jack's wife, Sandy, and son, Shaun, and Willard's sister-in-law, Edith French and her daughter and son-in-law, Grace and John Campbell, and their son, Rob. John Campbell succeeded Willard as library director in 1973.

Selectwoman Julie Hannum, a former Library Trustee, was the lead speaker.

Willard Cyrus French, born March 22, 1909, and died March 3, 1994, was a native and life-long resident of Sheffield. He was the middle of three children of Frederic B. and Grace Wilcox French. He graduated from Sheffield High School in 1927 and took graduate library courses at the University of New Hampshire.

A lover of art, poetry, peace, antiques, books, birds and flowers, Willard was appointed the first full-time paid town librarian in 1929 with a weekly salary of \$16. He assumed office just before the library moved from the Town Hall to a new home at the corner of Route 7 and Berkshire School Rd., the building that now houses the Sheffield Police Dept. Willard retired in 1973 after 44 years of service but stayed involved with the library as a trustee for many years.

Willard is fondly remembered as a "real character," someone who was passionate in his support of all of his many causes. He was an ardent and active Democrat, although he resigned from the town Democratic Committee in 1973 to protest bombings in Vietnam ordered by Lyndon Johnson. Willard was well known for his flamboyant brightly colored shirts and the bold, sil-



ver chain with the classic peace symbol that he always wore.

Active in community affairs, he was one of the founders of the Col. John Ashley House Association in 1959, serving as its first president. He was a member of the Sheffield Historical Society and the Sheffield Friendly Union. He was known for traveling around New England to browse antique shops. He shared his love of art and antiques through revolving displays of artwork, artifacts, and antiques at the library. Many of Willard's most treasured items—vases, statues, and such—remain on display in our current library, as a tribute to his love of art and culture.

Willard served on the Sheffield School Committee in the 1940s and also on the committee that drew up the agreement that created the Southern Berkshire Regional School District in the 1950s. He and his brother, Carlton, sold to the town one-third of the land on which the town park is located and generously donated the rest of the land.

The sculptor, Jimmy Saunders, was a great friend of Willard's. A local artist and environmentalist, Jimmy and his wife, Jasmine, established a Christmas tree farm on Home Road, which is now owned by their son, Peter Saunders.

The memorial plaque includes a quote by Lillian Preiss, taken from her book, *Sheffield—Frontier Town*. It reads: "From 1929 until his retire-



French family (at left) and friends gathered for the dedication of the bust of Willard French in the Library lobby (above).

ment in 1973, Mr. French ruled over a kingdom of the intellect and the soul, exhibiting his treasures and judiciously selecting the collection of books which grew from 4,500 volumes to 22,000 during his tenure."

After Willard died, the next Sheffield Town Report, covering 1993, was dedicated to his accomplishments and service, as well as to those of two other town "giants," Sidney Q. Curtiss and John Ingersoll, who had also recently passed away. Willard's Town Report memorial summed up what he meant to Sheffield, and what Sheffield meant to Willard: "Willard was part of Sheffield's character, as Sheffield was part of Willard's."

Following Selectwoman Hannum's remarks, several family members and friends shared stories about Willard that showcased his wit and humor and his dedication to the town. It was noted that Willard was very proud of the fact that he had either read, or at least scanned, every book that he placed on a library shelf. One time when asked if he had read "every book in the library," he inquired, "And who was the author?"

Sheffield can be proud of Willard French who created a modern town library and gave it such a firm foundation. Thanks to him and his two successors, John Campbell and the current library director Nancy Hahn, as well as the townspeople's support, the Bushnell-Sage is now one of Massachusetts' best small town libraries.

—Julie Hannum & Peter Rowntree

RECOMMENDED READING

Reaching for Power: the Shi'a in the Modern Arab World by Yitzhak Nakash (Princeton University Press, 2006).

I was surprised and delighted to find such a timely and topical book as this on the shelves of our small library. It demonstrates how up-to-date we are.

Most people are quite ignorant about the Shi'a branch of Islam (the word is sometimes transliterated from Arabic as "Shi'ite") and Shi'a Arabs. The depth of this ignorance and how dangerous it can be is illustrated by the infamously inaccurate observation of one of the principal architects of the Iraq war, former Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz. During the build up for the invasion, he said that Iraqi Shi'a are "a secular people" and therefore will welcome our troops. This excellent book demonstrates how wrong he was and how the war and occupation of Iraq has intensified both their religiosity and the deep divide between them and Iraqi Sunnis.

The author, Yitzhak Nakash, is one of the world's leading experts on Shi'ism. The book focuses on what is becoming known as the "Shi'a revolution" in four predominantly Arab countries: Iraq (in which Shi'a constitute 60 percent of the population) and Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and Lebanon (in which they are significant minorities). Long despised and suppressed by Sunni rulers who see them as heretics or even infidels (many religious Sunnis regard them as apostate, worse than Christians and Jews), the Shi'a have been fighting back in recent decades: demanding equal status, their fair share of political and economic power and more respect for their religious beliefs.

Nakash points out that these efforts have had only modest success until fairly recently—in Iraq only after the toppling of Saddam Hussein and his Sunni-led regime. But now Shi'a Arabs in both Iraq and Lebanon seem to be acquiring significantly more clout, thanks in no small part to America's policies and actions in the region. This state of affairs, coupled with the increased radicalism and influence of Shi'a clerics, delights the Iranians (who, while not Arabs, are overwhelmingly Shi'a) and dismays the governing classes of the Sunni-ruled countries. The latter fear—with good reason—the formation of a so-called "Shi'a crescent" stretching

from Iran to Iraq and on (through Syria) to Lebanon.

These developments are bound to have enormous consequences for the Middle East. While Nakash sees some reason for optimism, he warns that if the United States continues to misplay its hand it will "spark a new brand of religious nationalism with strongly anti-American overtones, badly inflame relations between Islam and the West, and seriously undermine America's interests in the region." We seem to be a fair way down this road already.

The Far Pavilions by M. M. Kaye (St. Martin's Griffen 1997). This book was first published in 1978—more than a generation ago. Why should you read it now? For one thing, the book is a romantic adventure novel set in a fascinating time and place. It magically transports the reader to the mysterious Indian subcontinent—what is now India, Pakistan and Afghanistan—in the latter half of the 19th century and describes a wonderful love affair between Anjuli, a beautiful Hindu princess, and Ash, a handsome British officer who was born and brought up by Indians and speaks, looks like and spends most of the book passing for a native. You will meet a succession of evil maharajas, scheming monks and imams, pompous Brits, Pathan bandits, Persian traders and blood thirsty dacoits.

For another, it is excellent historical fiction that accurately portrays a number of real events and situations as well as the

MARTHA GREENE RETIRES

Over 30 people gathered at the library on Aug. 18 for a party to celebrate Martha's retirement after 14 years of dedicated service. Speakers included Betty LeGeyt, chair of the Board of Library Trustees, Library Director Nancy Hahn and Patrick Burns, president of the Friends of the Library.

Nancy thanked Martha for being such an important part of the library and said that she knew more about it than anyone else and could find anything almost instantly. Martha has written a book on the history of the institution.

The good news is that Martha will not really retire but will serve as a volunteer for several hours on Thursdays.

—Peter Rowntree

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HOURS

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Friday	10-8
Saturday	10-5
Sunday	2-5
Monday	Closed

overwhelming diversity of the inhabitants of the subcontinent—religious, ethnic, tribal, linguistic and social. The story starts shortly before the 1857 Sepoy Mutiny (the first large scale effort by Indians to throw the British out of their country) and ends just after the 1879 massacre of the entire British diplomatic mission to Kabul (excluding Ash) with lots of satisfying sieges, battles, heroics and skullduggery in between.

And for another, it is a fast paced, thoroughly enjoyable read—a real page turner, all 955 of them.

I am constantly amazed by the number of our otherwise literate friends who have never heard of this riveting book. We always feel we have done a good deed by inducing someone else to read it—and envious that they have such a treat in store.

—Peter Rowntree

TWO NEW STAFFERS

The library welcomes Ann Dunn and Nory Loeung to the staff. Ann, who has lived in Ashley Falls for three years, has been appointed the library's Circulation Director. Library Director Nancy Hahn and the Library trustees have wanted to create this new full-time position for some time and were delighted when the proposal was approved at the May town meeting.

Having another full-time person at the library, someone familiar with what is going on and there every day, will be very helpful. It will provide more continuity, increase efficiency and ease the administrative burden on the director. Ann was an editor at a large New York publishing house for many years and still does editing on a freelance basis.

Nory moved to the Berkshires in July and now lives in Pittsfield. She is a part-time employee who will be on duty about 16 hours a week. She has library experience, having worked for three years at the UCLA law library.

Nancy is delighted that both Ann and Nory have joined the staff.

—Peter Rowntree

FROM THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN'S MINUTES

5/15—David Macy was unanimously voted Chair of the Board of Selectmen, and Julie Hannum unanimously voted Clerk. The Board welcomed its newest member, James Collingwood, who has previously served the town on many levels.

At the recommendation of Police Chief James McGarry, Ryan Lucy will participate in the Police Academy in Springfield as a Student Officer.

Melanson Health & Company will perform the fiscal year 2006 financial audit, despite an expressed concern about the company's rising prices. The Board ratified re-appointments of Mark Bachetti and John James made by Town Moderator Bruce Person to the Finance Committee.

A curb cut permit was issued to Frank and Julie Barros for their property located on Home Rd.

The Board approved the closing to traffic of the Sheffield Green from Old Parish Church to Silk's Variety Store from 2 to 7pm on Sept. 9 for Sheffield in Celebration.

The Board of Selectmen will hold a joint meeting with the Planning Board to discuss the Master Plan Implementation Advisory Committee's mid-year report.

6/5—Planning Board Chair, Rene Wood, discussed the progress of the Smart Growth Grant and submitted letter from the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission regarding applying for a grant for the next fiscal year [see story on page 17]. Two possibilities of focus for a new grant are accessory apartments as a way to create affordable housing or an engineering study for the capacity of the Village Center for housing development. The maximum amount of the grant is \$30,000. Rene Wood was voted grant manager.

The Board approved participation in the household hazardous waste collection program for FY07. Recycling Coordinator David Steindler discussed the building of a "swap shed" at the Transfer Station. Arlene Miller, the Western Massachusetts Recycling Co-

ordinator, offered to come and discuss the project with the town.

Joe Wilkinson submitted information from White Engineering in support of a request for a three-year renewal of the Kradel gravel excavation permit for East Stahl Rd. issued in 2003. The Board will visit the site and is waiting for a stamped map from White Engineering.

Selectman Hannum and Planning Board member Bart Elsbach gave an update on the Master Plan Implementation Committee. The committee has focused on affordable housing and open/recreational space, with Jean Armstrong helping in the preparation of the mid-year report. The target date for the open space plan in Dec. 31, 2006. Selectman Macy suggested that an outline is needed for direction of the committees. After discussion, the board endorsed the focus of the implementation committee.

Students at Undermountain School requested and were given permission to plant at the Shay's Rebellion marker. Carl Schumann asked that the Selectmen keep in mind the historic nature of the land where the senior center will be built and that any design be appropriate. [See story on page 17.]

Joel Weiss submitted his resignation from the Board of Health. The board extended the School Committee appointments until June 30 and made dozens of re-appointments to the police and fire departments and town boards and commissions. Appointment of the Conservation Commission's sixth member was placed on hold. [For a full listing, see the Selectboard minutes posted on the town website at www.sheffieldma.gov.]

The Board agreed to sign the deed for lot number two in the Sheffield Business Park. A bid of \$2,574 was accepted for a used police cruiser.

A curb cut permit was approved for Upper Barnum St. Selectman Hannum expressed concern over the crosswalks on Main St. (Route 7) and the board agreed to send a letter to Mass Highway asking for the crosswalks to be painted.

Rhonda LaBombard was welcomed

Televised Board of Selectmen's meetings can also be seen on CTSB Cable Channel 16. Check schedule for times. Not all meetings are televised.

as the new administrative assistant.

6/19—Administrator Weitz read a letter of resignation from Planning Board Member Fred Gordon.

Additional board and committee members were re-appointed to the Culture Council, Berkshire Regional Planning Commission and Southern Berkshire Regional School District Committee.

Regarding the Smart Growth Grant for FY07, the board concurred with Planning Board Chairman Rene Wood that the focus be on an engineering study of the capacity for development in the Village Center.

The Board made a site visit to the gravel bed on East Stahl Road and was satisfied that all conditions were being met. The excavation permit was approved for three more years.

After a discussion of the fees and services provided by the town to Southern Berkshire Regional School District, the Board voted to deny a request to waive building inspector fees for the annual inspections at the school.

Selectman Hannum requested that a reminder be sent to all boards and commissions about the Conflict of Interest seminar hosted by the Town of Great Barrington June 29.

Library Director Nancy Hahn announced a garden dedication for June 24 and invited everyone to attend.

Rene Wood asked if the town is considering purchasing another business park since the first one is now full. She also suggested that safety improvements need to be made at the intersection of Hewins St. and Route 7. The Board agreed to send a letter to Mass Highway asking it to investigate changes to improve visibility and safety at the intersection, with copies to Sheffield's state senator and representative.

TOWN HALL NEWS

Senior Center project moves forward. The Town recently released a request for proposals for design services for the new Senior Center, which will be located on Cook Rd. behind the American Legion Hall on Route 7. Proposals from architectural firms are due September 1. Once proposals are received, a Designer Selection Committee will review the proposals, interview architectural firms, check references and make a recommendation to the Board of Selectmen. After a firm has been chosen, a Senior Center Building Committee will be appointed to work with the architect to develop the building plans. The design deadline is April 2, 2007.

So far, Carl Schumann and Grace French have been appointed to the Designer Selection Committee. If anyone is interested in serving on either that or the building committee, let the Town Administrator/Selectmen's Office know.

In the meantime, the property survey has been completed, the "Form A" for the division of the Legion property has been submitted and approved by the Planning Board, and the town is proceeding toward the transfer of the property from Sheffield Post Home, the owners of the property.

Village green enhancement may be funded. There is reason to be optimistic

about the completion of Phase II of the Village Green Enhancement Project. Mass Highway has advised us that they plan to advertise for bids in Federal Fiscal Year 07, which begins Oct. 1, 2006. In anticipation of this, the town recently contracted with Foresight Engineering of Pittsfield, MA, to update the project drawings and cost estimates. The Berkshire County Metropolitan Planning Organization recently approved the project on the FY07 Transportation Improvement Plan, a necessary requirement for project funding.

Phase II of the green enhancement includes reconfiguring the islands (including additional angle parking near the post office), reconstructing of the road-

way and installing period street lighting on the islands and landscaping.

Railroad barn to be replaced. The old freight house located behind the Town Hall along the Housatonic Railroad is scheduled to be replaced this fall with a new building of the same size and style. This project was recently approved by the Zoning Board of Appeals and the Massachusetts Department of Transportation, whose approval is necessary for any building project located with former railroad rights-of-way. Construction will be undertaken by the Sheffield Volunteer Hose Company, and the building will be utilized by the Fire Department for storage of equipment.

—Bob Weitz, Town Administrator

SMART GROWTH GRANT UPDATE

Work funded by the Smart Growth Technical Assistance Grant for Fiscal Year 2006 is in the home stretch, as the grant runs out at the end of the year. Here's what's been happening:

The Zoning By-Law Revision subcommittee meets weekly to review and update the town's current zoning by-laws. The subcommittee's work is now focused on the remainder of the town's by-laws, as it has nearly completed its work on a Table of Use Regulations, which will, with town voter's approval, replace pages of text with an easy-to-use and -understand grid of what uses, in each of the town's districts, are permitted by right or by special permit. (See the stories on pages 18 and 19.) When the subcommittee completes its work, the updated by-laws will be presented to the Planning Board for its review and action.

The Master Plan Implementation

Advisory Committee and its two subcommittees continue to make progress. They updated the Board of Selectmen and the Planning Board in June. One subcommittee is focused on updating and completing the town's Open Space and Recreation Plan; the second subcommittee is focused on housing that is affordable for community members.

The Berkshire Regional Planning Commission recently submitted a Smart Growth Technical Assistance Grant for Fiscal Year 2007 on behalf of the town of Sheffield. The application requested \$30,000 to analyze the capacity of the Sheffield Village Center and the Village Center District to accommodate additional housing development. This grant would include an analysis of infrastructure capacity. Announcement of the grant awards are expected to be made sometime in September.

—Rene Wood

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THE PEOPLE WHO ARE UPDATING THE ZONING BY-LAW

As reported in the last several issues of the Sheffield Times, the Zoning By-Law Revision subcommittee has been meeting weekly to work on a major updating of Sheffield's zoning by-laws. The most active members have been Tony Gulotta, Doc Nourse, Peter Rowntree, David West and Rene Wood (who is acting as subcommittee chair). Other members of the subcommittee join in as their time permits, and it is expected that the full subcommittee will be involved in the review process once the revision draft is complete.

The subcommittee is extremely fortunate to have Doc, David and Tony as members. All are natives of Sheffield and know the town and its recent history extremely well. Doc and David were "present at the creation," having been key participants on the team that rewrote Sheffield's original zoning by-laws in the early 1990s, after the first attempt was not approved by voters. Both have an astonishing ability to recall why obscure and seemingly wholly incomprehensible clauses were written the way they are and what they were intended to mean. As Peter commented, "It's like having John Adams and Thomas Jefferson around to help you interpret the Constitution."

Santi Gulotta, Tony's father, had also been part of that team. Tony remembers hearing his dad talk about that effort. "My father knew how important it was to serve, protect and preserve our town and so do I. This is exactly what our by-laws were designed to do," he recently said. He went on, "I believe with the changing times, that from time to time, our by-laws will need to be reviewed and updated. This committee has done just that, while at the same time trying to simplify them and make them easier for us to understand and use. I would like to thank all the members of this committee for their dedication and hard work."

David, Doc and Tony also have the experience of serving on the Planning Board and/or the Zoning Board of Appeals, the two town boards most concerned with the by-laws. That has imbued them with a good sense of what

changes might be acceptable to town voters. Given his knowledge and years of service to the town, when Doc recently commented that "this committee has done an excellent job in reviewing the existing by-laws," it meant a lot to the subcommittee members.

The subcommittee's steersman, conciliator and guide is the very able, knowledgeable and unflappable Tom Matuszko, assistant director of the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission. Tom knows Ashley Falls and Sheffield well. He's been instrumental in getting the town two grants and has assisted the town with its right to farm by-law, agricultural commission by-law and recent update of its water supply protection district by-law.

The subcommittee's legal consultant is attorney Mark Bobrowski, an acknowledged expert in land use planning and zoning regulations who has advised over 70 other Massachusetts' municipalities in connection with modernization and revision of their zoning by-laws. When the draft revision is completed, it will be reviewed by Sheffield's Town Counsel.

Work has proceeded slower than anticipated, since, as Tom noted, "the committee is very thorough and has been really aware of the effect this work might have on the residents of Ashley Falls and Sheffield." The subcommittee anticipates that revisions will be ready for town voters' consideration at a special Town Meeting later this fall.

The updating of the by-laws prin-

cipally aims to improve the organization of the various provisions, make them easier to read and understand and correct ambiguities and cure inconsistencies with state and federal laws as amended and interpreted by the courts over the years. One way the usability is being improved is by converting material that was buried in dense text into easy-to-read tables (see the article opposite).

"This has been a long and difficult project but a very rewarding one. Once completed, these by-laws will be something the town can be proud of," says Peter.

Town voters will have several opportunities to provide feedback and review the revisions prior to the special Town Meeting. The Planning Board will hold several public information meetings, as well as a public hearing. Such feedback is essential to making sure the proposed by-laws meet townspeople's needs. Look for notices of these events as well as when and where copies of the proposed new zoning by-laws will be available on the town's web site (www.sheffieldma.gov) and at Town Hall. All meetings of the subcommittee are posted on the town's bulletin board and are open to all townspeople.

—Peter Rowntree & Rene Wood

TOWN NEEDS PART-TIME CLERK

The Town is seeking a part-time clerk for the Zoning Board of Appeals. The job entails preparing board meeting agendas; keeping records; attending meetings; taking and transcribing minutes of meetings; and preparing correspondence. Send applications to Office of the Town Administrator, Town Hall, P.O. Box 325, Sheffield, MA 01257, 229-2335.

Transfer Station Hours

Tuesdays & Fridays: 1pm-4pm
Saturdays: 8am-4pm
Sundays: 8:30am-2pm

NEW FACE AT TOWN HALL

Rhonda LaBombard started work as the new administrative assistant to the Selectmen and the Town Administrator in late May. She has lots of experience in municipal government. She lives in Otis and, currently, is also the executive secretary for the Otis Selectmen, its treasurer and the secretary for its Conservation Commission.

She is enjoying her new job and thinks Sheffield's Town Hall is a good place to work.

—Peter Rowntree

PROPOSED TABLES MAKE ZONING EASIER TO UNDERSTAND

As part of its work of updating the town's zoning by-laws to make them consistent with state and federal laws and court decisions, the Zoning By-Law Revision subcommittee has been looking for ways to make the by-laws easier to read, understand and use.

One area of the current by-laws receiving considerable time and attention by the subcommittee is Article 4, which covers "use regulations." Use regulations specify what building or use is allowed in each of the town's four zoning districts:

Rural, Village Center, Commercial, and General Business District.

The use regulations now fill over three pages with tightly packed, hard-to-parse text. In its proposed draft, the subcommittee has converted this information into table form. The proposed Table of Use Regulations organizes all the use information into seven categories: residential; exempt; institutional; commercial; general business; other; and accessory. The section summarizing residential uses is shown above.

As the example shows, the table will clearly identify whether a use is allowed by right (Y), allowed by special permit (PB) or prohibited (N) in each of the town's four districts. The Notes section of the table directs the reader to sections in the proposed zoning by-laws that provide additional information. (The proposed by-laws will provide clearer and more complete definitions for terms, many of which are not defined in the current by-laws.)

The subcommittee also developed an easy-to-use Table of Dimensional Requirements that would replace Article 5 of the existing by-laws. The new table consolidates numerous dimensional requirements for lot size, frontage and setbacks and other specifications in one spot instead of having them scattered throughout the by-laws as they currently

EXCERPT FROM THE PROPOSED BY-LAW REVISION

EXCERPT Table of Use Regulations Town of Sheffield Zoning By-Laws

Key to districts: R = Rural District; VC = Village Center District; C = Commercial District; GB = General Business District
Key to uses: Y = Use permitted by right; N = Use prohibited; PB = Use permitted by special permit/planning board
Any building or use of premises not herein expressly permitted is hereby prohibited. All uses are subject to dimensional requirements established in § 4.

Principal use	District				Notes
	R	VC	C	GB	
A. Residential uses					
1. Single-family dwelling	Y	Y	Y	Y	Refer to § 10 for definition of dwelling, single-family dwelling. Refer to § 4.2 & Table of Dimensional Requirements for dimensional requirements.
2. Accessory single-family dwelling in Village Center District	N	Y	N	N	Refer to § 10 for definition of dwelling, accessory single-family dwelling/Village Center District
3. Accessory single-family dwelling in Commercial District	N	N	PB	N	Refer to § 10 for definition of dwelling, accessory, accessory single-family dwelling/Commercial district
4. Multi-family dwelling containing up to 4 dwelling units	PB	PB	N	N	Refer to § 10 for definition of dwelling, multi-family dwelling. Refer to § 4.2 & Table of Dimensional Requirements for dimensional requirements. Refer to § 9.3 for Special Permit information.
5. Multi-family dwelling containing up to 6 dwelling units	N	PB	N	N	Refer to § 10 for definition of dwelling, multi-family dwelling. Refer to § 4.2 & Table of Dimensional Requirements for dimensional requirements. Refer to § 9.3 for Special Permit information.
6. Two-family and three-family dwelling	Y	Y	Y	Y	Refer to § 10 for definition of dwelling, two and three-family dwelling. Refer to § 4.2 & Table of Dimensional Requirements for dimensional requirements.

are. No existing uses, allowable building areas and, most assuredly, no minimum lot areas, footages or setbacks have been changed.

The subcommittee is fortunate to have many different points of view and experiences represented in its membership; see the article on page 18.

ASSESSORS

Chapter 61A and 61B application deadlines. The annual applications are due on or before Oct. 1. Sorry, no exceptions. For any questions, please call 229-7001.

SHEFFIELD'S TOWN WEB SITE

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PLANNING BOARD NEWS

During the months of July and August, the Planning Board saw additional changes in board membership. At its Aug. 1 meeting, the board thanked Fred Gordon for his many years of dedicated service. Elected three times to the board, Fred held a variety of positions including vice-chair and treasurer and was invaluable in providing guidance to new members. On numerous issues the board benefited from his insights and legal training. He was instrumental in many projects, including the cell tower amendment, by-law reviews and adoption of the Master Plan. Fred's wit, charm and poise will be missed. We thank Fred for the many contributions he's made to the town during his years of service.

The board now has a full complement of members as the Board of Selectmen appointed Don Ward, a local businessman active in the community, as alternate member for special permits and both boards appointed Bill Gillooly, a recently retired teacher at Mt. Everett School, to the Planning Board until the May 2007 elections.

Bill and Don participated in the Larkin special permit hearing held and closed at the Aug. 15 meeting, where the board heard discussion on the application of James and Margaret Larkin for the proposed use of creating a building lot on their property on Egremont Rd. The board expects to begin its deliberations at its Sept. 5 meeting.

During the past two months, the board endorsed Form A (approval not required for development) applications for Barbara and David West; Jonathan Ingham and Chris Tyler Weld; John and Judy Ullrich; the Ullrich Realty Trust, Charles MacDonald; Susan Telensky, executor of the Eleanor Griffiths' estate; and Paula Wardynski. In addition, the board was granted a time extension on a Form A from Mike Parsons, agent for Don Perry, for property on Salisbury Rd. as the board had not been able to view access to the lots.

In addition, the board joined the Board of Selectmen in a joint meeting on July 12 to review the Master Plan's Implementation Advisory Committee actions to date and provide recommendations and assistance. The two subcommittees—Open Spaces and Community Housing—are making progress and still looking for interested townspeople to join their efforts. (For those who

are interested, copies of the Town Master Plan Summary of Recommendations are available in the Town Hall and the Bushnell Sage Library.)

Following a request from a resident who wishes to change her bed and breakfast to a boarding house for elderly residents, a use not allowed under current zoning by-laws, the board authorized the Zoning By-Law Review Subcommittee to draft proposed by-law language to add "boarding house" as a new use permitted by special permit in the Village Center District. The draft proposal will be reviewed by the Planning Board and a public hearing will be held to gather input on the topic. Depending on that input, the proposed by-law would then be presented to town voters at the next town meeting.

Les Fleming of Euro Precision Co., a Sheffield Business Park tenant, requested several changes to his granted special permit regarding conditions dealing with building size, height and configuration. The board approved the changes.

Finally, the board finalized procedures to streamline its operations and manage its increasing workload. It will begin a review of the Form A application and procedures as a first step in reviewing all Planning Board forms to make them more convenient and easier to use. It also sent correspondence to the Board of Selectmen on several issues and began to discuss common driveways, precipitated by several recent inquiries.

Board meetings are the 1st and 3rd Tuesdays of the month at 7:30pm in the first-floor conference room, Town Hall. All meetings are posted and open to the public. All are welcome.

—Rene Wood, Chair

TOWN CLERK

Licensing. Hunting/fishing and sporting licenses and stamps are available during regular business hours. Hunters: Please be aware that there are changes in obtaining 2007 licenses. For more information, contact this office or the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife.

Dog licenses for 2006 are available. If you reside in Sheffield at least 30 days of the year or you have a dog six months of age or older, that dog is required to be licensed. The cost is \$4 for a spayed/neutered dog, \$10 for an intact dog.

Voter registration. The Town Clerk's office is open from 9am-4pm weekdays for voter registration. I would encourage college students to apply for absentee ballot applications before going away to school. If you have questions pertaining to this process please call the Town Clerk's office at 229-8752 during regular business hours.

Elections. There will be a state primary on Tues., Sept. 19. The deadline to register to vote in it is Aug. 30. The state election will be on Tues., Nov. 7. The deadline to register to vote in that election will be Oct. 18. The Clerk's office will be open until 8pm on those deadline dates to register new voters.

Voting for the Sept. 19 state primary will be held in the Carlton French Meeting Room on the first floor of Town Hall. Polling hours are 7am-8pm.

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RECYCLING

Alkyd paint and oil. Sheffield residents can take unwanted oil paint, stains, paint thinners and turpentine, or used motor oil to the Great Barrington Recycling Center, Rt. 7 across from Monument Mountain High School, on Sat., Sept. 9, 9-11:30am. Latex paint will not be accepted. Empty or dried up cans of latex paint can be disposed with the regular trash. Empty cans of oil-based paint, stains and solvents can be disposed with the regular trash as well.

Household hazardous waste. A comprehensive household hazardous waste collection, where oil and oil-based paints along with substances such as insecticides, weed killers, oven cleaner, photo chemicals, mercury thermometers and rechargeable batteries, will be held Sat., Oct. 14, 9am-1pm, at the Great Barrington Transfer Station, Route 7, across from Monument Mountain High School. Farmers can bring agricultural pesticides to this collection for no charge.

Please pre-register for either pickup with the Center for Ecological Technology by calling 800-238-1221 or 445-4556, ext. 17 or 25.

SHEFFIELD FIRE DEPT. FIRE LOG

—Chief Rick Boardman

May

- 23 Alarm at 51 Woodbeck Ridge. Alarm time 1:36pm. In service 1:48pm.
- 25 Lifting assistance. Alarm time 5:03am. In service 5:30am.
- 27 Car accident. Alarm time 11:04am. In service 12:00pm.
- 29 Alarm at 640 N. Main St. Alarm time 10:28am. In service 10:43am.
- 30 Alarm at 700 S. Main St. Alarm Time 12:55pm. In service 1:09pm.
- 31 Alarm at 2080 S. Undermountain Rd. Alarm time 1:30pm. In service 1:55pm.

June

- 3 Alarm at 517 Kelsey Rd. Alarm time 7:52pm. In service 8:25pm
- 6 Burnt food at Berkshire School. Alarm time 8:09pm. In service 8:45pm.
- 8 Rescue in Mt. Washington. Alarm time 9:18am. In service 2:26pm.
- 10 Tree on wires. Alarm time 6:10pm. In service 7:01pm.
- 18 Car accident. Alarm time 9:30am. In service 1:15pm.
- 27 Alarm at Mt. Everett School. Alarm time 12:31pm. In service 12:50 p.m.
- 29 Alarm at 34 Home Rd. Alarm time 6:39pm. In service 6:45pm

July

- 7 Alarm at 2080 S. Undermountain Rd. Alarm time 10:56pm. In service 11:31pm.
- 27 Alarm at Sheffield Plastics. Alarm time 4:07pm. In service 4:18pm.
- 28 Alarm at 616 Sheffield Plain. Alarm time 8:51pm. In service 9:00pm.
- 30 Furnace blowback. Alarm time 2:56pm. In service 3:30pm.

August

- 14 Forest fire on mountain. Alarm time 12:33pm. In service 8:14pm.
- 19 Lost hiker. Alarm time 8:10pm. In service 5:00am.

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REEVES LEATHER AND ANTIQUES: SHEFFIELD'S UNIQUE CRAFTER

Stepping into George Reeves' leather shop on Route 7 is a bit like stepping back into the 1960s. The aroma of fresh leather is everywhere. The walls and shelves abound with one-of-a-kind hand-made leather bags and cases, and retro-style woven belts hang on a pole. Behind the counter you'll find George Reeves, who has been making leather goods for more than 43 years.

George, who is 65 years old and originally from Boston, was always interested in working with his hands. As a child, he drew pictures and carved things out of wood. One summer, he tried leather crafts and realized that that was what he wanted to do the rest of his life. He is completely self-taught and learned the intricacies of his craft by trial and error. In 1963, he began making sandals and took some samples to a local clothing store. The storekeeper liked them and, to George's shock—and dismay—said he wanted 300 pairs! George rented space in a cobbler's shop, drove a truck during the day to support himself and made sandals by night. He completed the order and was on his way.

George was soon able to open his own shop in the Bay Village neighborhood near downtown Boston, a city that, during the heyday of handcrafted leather, had 20 individual leather stores. He often had from one to five people working for him and by 1971 was making leather items that few others made—capes, bedspreads, dresses, boxes, chessboards, as well as unique bags, belts and briefcases. George also continued making sandals, which he said was "gruesome" work.

In 1971, George moved his leatherworks to Martha's Vineyard, and in 1972 to Cambridge. Over the years, he also branched out into contract manufacturing for larger leather makers for whom he made thousands of briefcases and leather notepads. In 1988, he moved to the Berkshires, where he first had his shop at the Buggy Whip Factory in Southfield. In 1992, he moved to Jennifer House Commons, where he remained until 2000. At Jennifer House, George also sold refinished country pine antiques, which he bought and restored by himself. He also restored and sold old cabinetmakers' workbenches, which buyers used in kitchens or entryways. But leather items remained the focus of his business.

In the spring of 2001 Reeves Leather and Antiques moved to its present location on Route 7 adjacent to the Great Finds Antique Center just north of the Corn Crib. What immediately greets the shopper are the "carpet bags"—leather handbags that are covered front and back with antique oriental rugs. George explains that he buys 80-year-old Bokara and kilim rugs, washes and repairs them, and sews them onto bags that are completely lined and sided in leather. The vibrant orange and red and muted brown and blue patterns make these exceptional bags a unique Sheffield find. The store also has a few antiques—some 1800s nightstands, a 1790s blanket box, and an old wooden bar stool with a new leather seat. But leather remains the mainstay, and the tables are covered with handmade wallets, notebooks and check-book covers and the stacked leather boxes that can take as long as three days to make.

George Reeves believes he is now the only leather worker in



George Reeves works at his leather shop on Route 7 in Sheffield.

Southern Berkshire county and the only leather worker in all of Berkshire County who still makes all of his own leather creations and sells them in his own shop. Although he now calls his shop "my retirement hobby," George would love to continue making and selling his leather crafts as long as possible. Little did he know that when, as a child, he hoped to make things out of leather for the rest of his life, his wish would come true. —Judith Schumer



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KIWANIS NEWS

Work at the Choral Festival. Approximately 35 members of the Sheffield Kiwanis Club worked some aspect of the five-week Berkshire Choral Festival, July 9 to August 12 on the Berkshire School campus. Sunday through Thursday, the club hosts a cocktail bar for the singers afternoons and evenings at Shawn's Place in the student lounge area. Our jobs there include cashiering and bartending. For the Saturday night concerts, we have the daunting task of parking vehicles in three lots on campus. Prior to the music program and during intermission our trailer crew serves light supper fare and beer and wine. The Kiwanis Club has been on the BCF scene since its inception 25 years ago. Kiwanians will agree that this is one of our most enjoyable projects.

Steak Roast part of Sheffield in Celebration. The next item on our busy summer agenda is the annual Steak Roast. This year it will be a part of Sheffield in Celebration on Sat., Sept. 9, in cooperation with the Sheffield Volunteer Fire Dept. Kiwanis will share the profits of the event, giving a major portion of the funds raised to the Firemen's Building Fund. For years the Steak Fry (as it was then called) was held annually the weekend after the Berkshire Choral Festival, in the same hockey rink/music shed. A bar, a band and dancing were part of the evening's activities. The steak fry eventually became a chicken BBQ in conjunction with our fiddle contest, a project that lasted for five years. After that, the steaks stayed in the freezer for a few years.

Finally, with the constant urging of Dave "Smitty" Smith,

the event was revived two years ago and combined with activities at the Sheffield Town Park, it became a Family Fun Day. This year it seemed like a great idea to join the firemen and the Celebration committee and make the event on Sept. 9 a super day! Steaks, baked potatoes, corn on the cob, salad and desserts will be served in and around the firehouse area from 5:30 to 7:30pm. The price remains \$20 and with that ticket you get a beverage of your choice of beer, wine or soda. We hope to see you there! For more about Sheffield in Celebration, see page 7.

Radiothon. On Friday, Sept. 22, Kiwanis will dominate the air waves from Station WSBS in Great Barrington for our annual Radiothon. With the station's cooperation, we have been able to schedule this event in the early days of autumn instead of the cramped calendar that is springtime. We hope to get the continued support of the citizens of the seven towns we serve. Previous donors will receive a mailing prior to the air date, and contributors' names will be read over the radio. Kiwanians will be at the microphones and phones from 7am until noon. We depend on these donations to help fund scholarships and support Little League baseball and other youth sports. We hope listeners will be as generous as they have been in the past.

Installation. On Sat., Sept. 30, the Sheffield club has scheduled its annual Installation and awards gala at the Egremont Country Club. New leaders will take office the following day, Oct. 1. The next president is Cathy Finkle, and other officers are: president-elect, David Johnson; vice president, Patricia Hardisty; secretary, Joe Todd; and treasurer, Richard Goodwin. Eight members of the Board of Directors will also be charged with their new duties. Highlights of the dinner-banquet are special awards such as the Citizen of the Year and Kiwanian of the Year.

Other activities. Back in August, eight of our members attended the New England District Kiwanis convention in Nashua, NH. Patty Hardisty, Marge Kirchner and Joe Todd served as the club's delegates. Four Kiwanians did car-parking duty at the Fairview Hospital Gala on the Berkshire School Campus on Aug. 26. We conclude our monthly litter patrols for the year with the Sept. and Oct. dates. The Breaking Break Soup Kitchen crew continues to host the supper about every seven weeks throughout the year. —Richard L. Goodwin

The Sheffield Kiwanis meets Tuesdays at 7:00pm at Limey's Restaurant.

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Good walking shoes and long pants suggested
1pm

FAMILY FUN DAY
Children's Activities (and for the Young at Heart)
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● DECORATE A HALLOWEEN COOKIE
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HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWS

African American Heritage events. The exhibit at the Old Stone Store, "If They Close the Door on You, Go in the Window," stays on view through Oct. 29. The Society is also a co-host of the symposium on Sept. 15 that's part of the inaugural tour of the Upper Housatonic African American Heritage Trail (see page 12 for more). The Society will not be holding a September meeting so people can attend the symposium.

Work bee. There are a number of projects, chiefly painting, but there will be many other projects and all ages and skill levels are welcome. Call the office to let us know you will be attending. Meet at the Dan Raymond House. Sat., Sept. 23, 10am to noon. Rain date: Sat., Sept. 30.

Architectural walking tour. As part of the Heritage Walks Weekend, the Society is offering a tour of the center of Sheffield, focusing on its 18th- and 19th- century homes and businesses. Hear the stories of the men, women and children who resided in these structures. Learn about the special features that make each building a key to understanding the past. Call 229-2694 to reserve a place. Comfortable walking shoes are recommended. The three-

quarters of a mile walk begins at the Society's Dan Raymond House headquarters and lasts approximately one hour. Sat., Oct. 7, 10am.

Monthly meeting. Program to be announced. Fri., Oct. 13, 7:30pm at Dewey Memorial Hall.

Annual cemetery stroll. Sackett Cemetery, Ashley Falls. Sat., Oct. 21, 4 to 6 pm.

These programs and the exhibition are made possible, in part, by support from the Massachusetts Cultural Council. The Sheffield Historical Society is located on Route 7 in the center of Sheffield. The Old Stone Store is also located on Route 7, on the Green in Sheffield. Hours are Saturdays from 10am-2pm, Sundays 11am-3pm, and by appointment. Tours of the Dan Raymond House are available Thursday through Saturday 11am-4pm; Admission fee. The Mark Dewey Research Center is open Monday and Friday, 1:30-4pm and by appointment. For more information, contact Sheffield Historical Society, 159-161 Main Street, PO Box 747, Sheffield, MA 01257, 413-229-2694 or email shs@sheffieldhistory.org.

NATURE CONSERVANCY ADDS 40 ACRES TO SCHENOB PRESERVE

At the end of July, The Nature Conservancy purchased 40 acres of calcareous wetlands, lowland forests and critical habitat along Schenob Brook off Barnum St. The property, purchased from Charles E. McDonald for \$185,000, is nearly surrounded by other properties either owned by the Conservancy or which the Conservancy helped to protect. The Conservancy will manage the new property as an addition to its Drury Preserve, also located on Barnum St.

"Schenob Brook is a beautiful piece of the history and ecology of Sheffield," said Jason Miner, program director for The Nature Conservancy's Berkshire Taconic Landscape Program. "This piece of property protects wetlands and open water streams that flow right into Schenob Brook. It's good news for everyone who cares about the brook and about clean water."

The Berkshire Taconic landscape is home to more than 150 rare and endangered species, one of the highest concentrations in New England. Since 1984, the Conservancy has been working to protect lands in the Berkshires through fee purchase, conservation restrictions and easements, and by assisting partner organizations. The Massachusetts, New York and Connecticut chapters of the Conservancy have operated a tri-state Landscape Program in Sheffield since 1993. The Nature Conservancy is an international, nonprofit organization that preserves plants, animals and natural communities by protecting the lands and waters they need to survive.

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LAND TRUST HOSTS WALK & FAMILY FUN DAY

Walk across a field to the limestone outcropping. If you look in one direction you see a large boulder. Where did it come from? If you walk down the hill and across the little valley suddenly you are in view of a small pond. Who lives there? Those and other questions will be answered by Anna James on a walk on private land in Sheffield on Sat., Oct. 28, tentatively scheduled for 1pm.

The host for this year's "property walk" sponsored by the Sheffield Land Trust is Twiggs Myers, and the land is on Berkshire School Rd. Once a year the Land Trust offers the community a guided walk of privately owned conservation land.

At the same time, the Land Trust will be hosting its second annual Fall Family Fun Day, tentatively scheduled for noon to 4pm on Oct. 28. If you attended last year's event with your children you know what fun this is. Enjoy Halloween three days early with food, games, costumes and pumpkin carving (or painting, for the very young). Weather permitting, there will also be scarecrow making—bring your old clothes to stuff, stakes and hay will be provided.

Everyone is welcome to these free events, which will take place rain or shine. Seasonal refreshments will be provided. Space is limited for the walk, so RSVP at the Land Trust's offices, 229-0234. There is room for everyone at the Family Fun Day. Look for confirmation on the times and details closer to the date in local papers. For more information or for directions, call the Land Trust.



Land in the Myers conservation restriction off Berkshire School Rd. will be the site of the Land Trust's Oct. 28 Fall Property Walk and Family Fun Day. The annual walk provides the public an opportunity to explore private conservation land on a guided tour. The whole family can enjoy Halloween a little early at the Fun Day.

The Sheffield Times is an inexpensive way to reach Sheffield customers. Contact Tara White at 229-7754 for information on how to advertise.



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REAL ESTATE TRANSFERS

JUNE

- 5 Eleanor F. Whitehouse to Cheryl Kane, property at 203 Canaan Rd., \$147,500.
- 6 Town of Sheffield to CMR, LLC, property at Sheffield Business Park, \$87,000.
- 15 Donald Waite & Donna Leep to W. Duston & Susan C. Lowell, property at Berkshire Lake Estates, \$3,500.
- 15 Wayne A. Speyrer & Richard A. Heim to Adam N. Kerzner & Susan Hawkins, property at 128 Foley Rd., \$379,900.
- 16 Brian C. Tobin to Barry J. & Susan B. Friedberg, property at 689 Rannapo Rd., \$822,500.
- 20 Christopher Palmer, Trustee, Rancho Denaro Real Estate Trust, to Lucien R. Mittaud, property at 952 Clayton Rd., \$175,000.
- 20 John Hoyt & Katherine Emory Stookey to Michael K. & Erin C. Salzmman & Barbara J. Oles, property at 354 Sheffield-Egremont Rd., \$315,000.
- 22 Hulett Hill Rd., LLC, to Shawn T. & Jennifer R. Goewey, property at Hulett Hill Rd., \$50,000.
- 26 Dena Bancroft to Richard Esposito, property at 7 Plymouth Lane, \$317,500.
- 28 Richard John & Pauline Griffith Banducci to James R. Siket Jr. & Sarah Pottle, property at 254 Salisbury Rd., \$220,000.

- 30 Hyland Country Investments, Inc., to Struggle Hill Nominee Trust, property in Sheffield and New Marlborough, \$200,000.

JULY

- 7 Charles MacDonald to Leo A. Bek, property at 856 Barnum Street, \$375,000.
- 7 Leo A. Bek to The Nature Conservancy, property at Barnum Street, \$185,000.
- 7 Leo A. Bek to William S. Webber V, property at 856 Barnum Street, \$235,000.
- 7 Gregg S. Massini to Butternut Basin, Inc., property at 377 South Main St., \$255,000.
- 12 James J. & Margaret J. Larkin to The Commonwealth of Massachusetts, an Agricultural Preservation Restriction for property at Maple Ave., Sheffield Plain, North Main St., Kellogg Rd. and Sheffield-Egremont Rd., \$1,900,000.
- 14 Eve L. & Louise Yohalem to Joseph E. & Aleida S. Calabrese, property at 110 Glennana Way, \$365,000.
- 20 Craig & Lisa Werhan to Bruce I. Panock & Ellen Antoville, property at 39 Glennana Way, \$439,000.

JOIN THE FUN! Sheffield's Fair is Saturday, September 9, 2006, 3-7pm

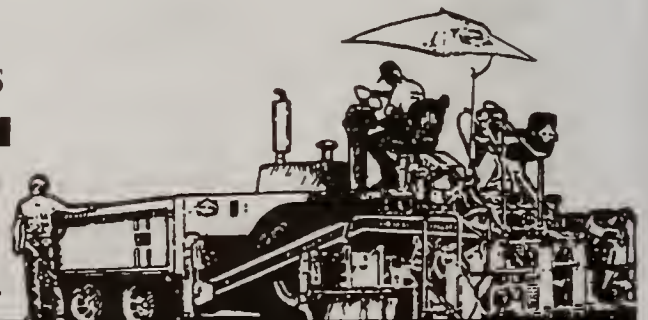
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Calendar Page

September

4 Labor Day

- 9 Sheffield in Celebration, Village Green, 3-7pm, p. 7
- 9 Concert fundraiser, Old Parish Church, 8pm, p. 11
- 9 Kiwanis Steak Roast, part of Sheffield in Celebration, p. 23
- 9 Alkyd paint and oil recycling, Gt. Barrington Recycling Center, 9-11:30am, p. 21
- 14 African American Heritage Trail Guide announcement, MCLA, 8pm, p. 12
- 14 Household hazardous waste recycling, Gt. Barrington Transfer Station, 9am-1pm, p. 21
- 15 African American Heritage Trail Inauguration, 8am, p. 12
- 15 If They Close a Door on You, Go in a Window" exhibit, Old Stone Store through Oct. 29, p. 24
- 22 Kiwanis Radiothon, WSBS, p. 23
- 22 Rosh Hashanah begins at sundown
- 23 Sheffield Historical Society Work bee, Dan Raymond House, 10-noon. Rain date 9/30, p. 24
- 28 Workshop on chronic health problems, NOAH center, p. 6
- 30 Kiwanis Installation and awards gala, Egremont Country Club, p. 23

October

1 Yom Kippur begins at sundown

- 7 Christ Church Silent Auction, 10am-4pm, p. 11
- 7 Sheffield Historical Society Architectural Walking Tour, Dan Raymond House, 10am, p. 24
- 9 Columbus Day
- 13 Sheffield Historical Society monthly meeting, Dewey Memorial Hall, 7:30pm, p. 24
- 15 Sheffield Times deadline
- 21 Sheffield Historical Society annual cemetery stroll, Sackett Cemetery in Ashley Falls, 4-6pm, p. 24
- 28 Property Walk and Family Fun Day, Sheffield Land Trust, 12-4pm, p. 25
- 29 Daylight Savings Time ends
- 31 Halloween

SENIOR CENTER CALENDAR

Foot care: Wed., Sept. 13, 9am

Hearing testing: Thurs. Sept. 21, 11am

Potluck luncheon: Sept. 28, 12 noon, discussion of disaster preparedness

Luncheon: Oct. 26, noon, Bill DeVoti's slide show "Rome Sampler"

ONGOING CALENDAR ITEMS

Meetings or events that occur on a less than weekly basis are noted by number – i.e. "1st, "3rd" indicates meetings the first and third times that day occurs in the month. * indicates appointment needed.

Mondays:

Food Assistance Program, Old Parish Church, 9-10:30am

Board of Selectmen, Town Hall, 7pm, 1st, 3rd

Board of Health, Town Hall, 7pm, 2nd

Meals on Wheels, Mon-Fri, except holidays

Foot care clinic, Dewey Hall/Senior Ctr., 1st

Tuesdays:

Senior Center physical fitness, 9am

Children's Story Hour, Library, 10am

Building Inspector, Town Hall, 8am -- Noon

Ashley Falls Historic District Commission, Town Hall, 6:30pm, 2nd

National Alliance for the Mentally Ill Support Group, Fairview Hospital Library, 6:30pm, 4th

Planning Board, Town Hall, 7:30pm, 1st, 3rd (except November)

Industrial Development Commission, Town Hall, 7:30pm, last

Kiwanis Club, Limey's Restaurant, 6:30pm

Thursdays:

Senior Center physical fitness, 9am

Parent-Child Playgroup, Greenwoods Community Church, 9:30-11:30am

Building Inspector, Town Hall, 5-7pm

*Blood Pressure Clinic, Dewey Hall/Senior Center, 9am-12pm, 2nd

*Hearing Testing available, Senior Center, 3rd

Conservation Commission, Town Hall, 7pm, 2nd, 4th

Fridays:

Farmer's Market, Old Parish Parking Lot, 3:30-6:30pm

Saturdays:

Contra Dancing, Sheffield Grange, Rte 7, 8:30pm, 4th

Sundays:

Men's Group, Old Parish, 7:45am, 2nd

See also: Cobble, p. 25; Historical Society, p. 24; Kiwanis, p. 23.

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